

Montana Handgunning, L.L.C.

SENATE JUDICIARY

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DATE 3/18/13

HB 304

Senate Judiciary Committee
State of Montana

March 18, 2013

I am a professional firearms instructor based in Ravalli County and wish to address HB 304 which would permit anyone who would be approved for a Montana Concealed Weapons Permit to be permitted to carry a concealed handgun without the current process which requires approved training, an application process and a Federal and State background check.

I am opposed to vacating the current system because, in my 22 years of instructional experience, with handguns, rifles, shotguns and tactical carbines for both law enforcement and the public, I have learned the following:

- almost no one is competent with any firearm.
- people do not know the laws and expected conduct in regards to legal and justifiable use of lethal force.

While it should be obvious that I strongly support the Second Amendment and the crucial rights it bestows, I am also very strong on the responsibility that comes with firearms. It is this, not the rights, that lead people into trouble.

I believe HB 304 would put added untrained and uneducated armed individuals into the public arena leading possibly to added risk and problems for the individual, the public, law enforcement and the State of Montana.

It is imperative, in my mind, that the gun world monitor itself and insist on high standards that will lead to safe and appropriate firearms ownership, use and carry so as to better protect our Second Amendment rights.

My Basic Handgun and Use of Force training program, which meets the Montana training requirement for a concealed weapons permit in five counties, is 11 hours in length. I teach the 8 hour segment on firearms use and have always engaged a law enforcement officer or an attorney for the 3 hour segment on legal and justifiable use of force.

My original partner was then Ravalli County Sheriff Jay Printz who, with the NRA, went to the Supreme Court and successfully overcame the Brady Bill's requirement that local law enforcement perform unfunded background checks on gun buyers. Jay retired at the end of 1998 and is now a member of the NRA's National Board of Directors. Beginning in 1999, then Ravalli County Attorney, George Corn, now an attorney in private practice, started, and continues, teaching the 3 hour legal segment. When necessary, I have used other qualified individuals including current Ravalli County Sheriff Chris Hoffman and his Undersheriff Perry Johnson.

In our program, a qualified professional teaches each segment ensuring a high level of quality in what is taught. This works best, in my opinion, for all concerned.

Firearms are an awesome responsibility, as well as a cherished right. HB 304, I believe, works against the best interests of gun owners, the public, law enforcement and our continued firearms freedoms. I cannot support anything that does this and my decades of instructional experience lead me to this view.

My phone number is 406/363-1336. I do not have email.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Kowack". The signature is fluid and written in dark ink.

Mark Kowack
President